

Expose and resist the MLSA! Overthrow the traitorous Macapagal-Arroyo regime!

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime reaped the people's anger when it signed the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) on November 21 despite the strong and long-standing opposition of broad sectors of society. Its decision was met by intense protest actions and criticism from various sectors.

It was not only the revolutionary movement and militant and progressive organizations that were furious at such puppetry and treason. The regime likewise incurred the ire of its reactionary political rivals. Even Macapagal-Arroyo's allies within the ruling coalition felt slighted when they were not even given the courtesy of being consulted and informed about the MLSA's approval. Prominent were Vice President Teofisto Guingona's firm and consistent criticism and the growth in the unity of anti-US interventionist forces.

The MLSA was purposely not subjected to debate and public scrutiny due to Malacañang's awareness of the intensity of opposition to the agreement. Prior to its signing, the US and the Macapagal-Arroyo regime conspired to deprive the people of any knowledge about the true objectives and content of the agreement and its implications on the welfare and security of the Philippines.

The MLSA's approval was railroaded in order to transform the country into a staging area and a recreation and transit point for US troops in the impending US war of aggression against Iraq. Plans



are also afoot to prepare bases in the Philippines to make it a launching pad for aggression and intensified intervention in North Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries in Asia whenever needed. The Philippines will thus be drawn into wars waged by the US, endangering the lives and security of its citizens.

The MLSA's traitorous approval marks not only the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's unbridled puppetry to its master US imperialism. It also constitutes an act of betrayal against the Filipino people, blatant disregard

for their welfare and all-out resistance to their movement for liberation.

In the face of all this, we must raise further the people's consciousness, strengthen and broaden our organizing work among them, broaden the national patriotic front and launch coordinated and massive actions to defend the sovereignty and national integrity of the Philippines and strongly oppose impending US military aggression. The surge of intense protests that greeted the MLSA's signing is a portent of bigger mass actions to come.

Utilize all means and forms of action and be creative in waging propaganda in order to make the people aware of the truth behind the MLSA, VFA and other similar agreements. The anti-VFA and anti-MLSA movements must be linked to the broader anti-imperialist movement, including the movement against imperialist "globalization" and other forms of economic exploitation by US imperialism in the Philippines. We must intensify further the movement to oust the puppet-to-the-core, repressive, corrupt and much-hated Macapagal-Arroyo regime. **AB**



THERE WILL BE NO CEASEFIRE IN THE FACE OF THE MACAPAGAL-ARROYO REGIME'S RELENTLESS ATTACKS

**STATEMENT BY GREGORIO "KA ROGER" ROSAL
SPOKESPERSON,
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6 DECEMBER 2002**

Although it has been the CPP-NPA's practice and desire to declare a ceasefire during Christmas to allow the people to celebrate the season and bolster the peace negotiations, it is the US-Macapagal-Arroyo regime itself that has eliminated whatever basis there is for a ceasefire declaration this Christmas season.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines has decided against declaring a ceasefire this Christmas season. This is because the Macapagal-Arroyo regime has demonstrated outright puppetry and perpetrated such fascist and antipeople measures especially this past year.

On November 21, the regime treacherously approved the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement that thoroughly runs roughshod on the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Through the MLSA and the Visiting Forces Agreement, the regime has transformed the entire Philippines into a US military base, the better for the US to intervene in the country, fight the revolutionary movement in the Philippines and make it a staging area for US wars of aggression and intervention in other countries.

Also in compliance with US dictates, the regime has stepped up fascism, run roughshod over the peace process and advanced the counterrevolutionary all-out war. It has intensified plunder as well as measures that trample on the people's welfare and cause them unspeakable suffering.

Christmas or not, the regime relentlessly goes on a rampage against the people and intensifies its all-out



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NO CEASEFIRE, PAGE 3

war against the revolutionary movement. It has long ago set aside the peace talks and like a broken record, repeatedly brands as "terrorist" the revolutionary movement to create a "terrorist hysteria," deceive the broad masses and rationalize the intensification of the fascist suppression of democratic and civil rights.

Worse, the regime plans to use the coming Christmas season to step up measures to malign, sow intrigues and launch armed attacks against the revolutionary movement. The regime's relentless attacks have effectively killed the ceasefire issue.

Macapagal-Arroyo herself has no regard for Christmas. She has expressed absolute lack of interest in having a serious ceasefire this Christmas season, just like her AFP and PNP generals' earlier declarations.

In this regard, all NPA units and the people, especially in guerrilla zones and fronts, are directed to step up their vigilance and state of readiness. They must be in a state of active defense and wage thorough resistance against any attack and act of repression by the reactionary regime, whether or not the AFP and PNP declare one of their fake suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO). **AB**

Victorious tactical offensives of the New People's Army

NOTORIOUS COLONEL WOUNDED IN ORIENTAL MINDORO AMBUSH

Col. Jovito Palparan, 204th Bde commander, was wounded in an NPA ambush in Barangay Villaflores, Puerto Galera, Mindoro Oriental on November 24. The ambush took place after Palparan boasted that the NPA had been wiped out in 90% of Mindoro.

At least four soldiers were killed when a land mine hit the truck they were riding. The guerrillas had already begun their retreat when they chanced upon Palparan's civilian vehicle that was trying to steer clear of the fighting.

Palparan, the notorious butcher of Mindoro, is responsible for many cases of abduction and summary executions in the island.

LOGGING COMPANY IN ISABELA PUNISHED

The New People's Army burned at least 20 trucks, a bulldozer, a forklift and a pickup truck at the Philippine Aggregates

Timber Export Company (Pateco) sawmill in Sitio Diden, Barangay Dibulo, Dinapigue, Isabela on December 7. The damage is estimated to be worth up to P60 million.

Before burning down the equipment, the guerrillas first put the drivers and heavy equipment operators out of harm's way.

Pateco was meted punishment for its destruction of the environment and refusal to abide by the taxation policies of the people's revolutionary government.

NPA PUNISHES CEMENT, MINING COMPANIES

Red fighters torched the control room of the Goodfound Cement Corporation, a Taiwanese firm, in Barangay Palanog, Camalig, Albay on November 29. According to the Santos Binamera Command (the NPA provincial command in Albay), the company was punished for practices that were detrimental to nature and the people's health.

Goodfound is a major cement producer in the eastern part of the Philippines. Albayanos had been strongly opposed to its operations even before it set up its factory in 1997.

It was around 10 p.m. when guerrillas posing as AFP soldiers entered the factory. They confiscated seven shotguns and seven .38 revolvers from the guards. Before burning down the factory, the guerrillas first transferred the factory's employees to a nearby school.

Meantime, an NPA unit also successfully disarmed guards of a mining company in Agusan del Sur on November 24. The Red fighters seized twelve high-powered firearms.

RHB AMBUSHED IN PAMPANGA

Four elements of the bandit Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB) were killed in an ambush by Red fighters in Barangay San Roque, Sta. Ana,

Pampanga on November 9. Three high-powered firearms were seized from the bandits.

According to Armando Ortillano, spokesperson of the Palermo Ortáñez Command of the NPA in Pampanga, troops from the 69th IB and the 46th Military Intelligence Group (MIG) attempted to rescue the RHB, but the Red fighters had already made their retreat. To cover up the NPA's victorious tactical offensive, the 7th ID reported to the media that the military was responsible for the ambush.

The ambush was in response to the masses' demand to punish the RHB for its crimes against the people of Central Luzon. Among others, the RHB is responsible for killing and harassing innocent

civilians; pillaging and conducting extortion activities; and damaging and forcibly entering civilians' houses.

VICTORIOUS OPERATIONS LAUNCHED IN SARANGANI AND NEGROS

A soldier was killed and another wounded when the NPA ambushed troops of the 11th and 61st IB conducting patrols in Sitio Bangko-Bangko, Barangay Manlocahoc, Sipalay City in Negros Occidental on November 10.

On the other hand, NPA guerrillas seized six Garand rifles from elements of the Civilian Volunteer Organization (CVO) in Barangay Congan, Glan, Sarangani on November 8. The overconfident CVO elements were unable to fire a single shot. **AB**



"More numerous, more frequent, bigger tactical offensives in 2003"-Ka Roger

Selected members of the media gathered on December 7 in a guerrilla zone in Bicol for an interview with Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson. It was a jolly get-together highlighted by a speech from Ka Roger, a military parade by New People's Army fighters and a night of cultural presentations joined by everyone present.

In his speech, Ka Roger strongly condemned the US-Macapagal-Arroyo's use of dirty tactics against the revolutionary movement. Among others, the regime has been spreading various kinds of filthy propaganda and scrambling to portray revolutionaries as "terrorists" and "criminals." Said Ka Roger, "This is the lowest form of propaganda: distorting the truth and manufacturing stories."

He likewise condemned the regime's all-out war that victimizes no other than unarmed civilians in the countryside. He said that not a few retched at the news that Macapagal-Arroyo had pinned a medal on Col. Jovito Palparan, a notorious human rights violator who was ambushed by Red fighters in Mindoro island on November 24. "As time passes, GMA is getting to resemble Marcos more and more, especially with respect to human rights violations," he said.

All things considered, it is the Macapagal-Arroyo regime that is the real terrorist in the Philippines because it relentlessly kills and victimizes civilians. This is due to its desperate attempt to cling to power in the face of its dwindling popularity resulting from reeking cases of corruption and anomalies, its out-and-out puppetry and the worsening economic crisis.

Ka Roger branded US imperialism as the "super-terrorist" and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the "number one terrorist lover."

According to Ka Roger, the revolutionary movement can not undertake acts of terrorism. "Waging revolution does not constitute terrorism. Terrorism is contrary to waging revolution," he added.

In contrast to the desperation shown by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, the revolutionary movement is rapidly advancing in the countryside. Said Ka Roger, "There will be more numerous, more frequent and bigger tactical offensives in the year 2003."

"The Communist Party is now stronger in an all-sided way compared to the start of the rectification movement in 1992. More and more people are turning their backs on the ruling system and embracing the CPP's revolutionary program," he added. **AB**

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime's worsening corruption

There is no end to the exposés of cases of corruption and anomalies involving Macapagal-Arroyo, her husband and high officials within her regime. Because of the magnitude of the cases involved, even Macapagal-Arroyo's allies can no longer stomach her brazen and outright opportunism and greed.

Thus, even the likes of the Makati Business Club and the World Economic Forum have expressed their disappointment with the regime. It will be remembered that the Makati Business Club was one of the business organizations at the forefront of those who supported Macapagal-Arroyo when she took power. Prior to this, the Philippines had already landed 11th on Transparency International's list of the world's most corrupt countries.

It is estimated that the regime stole up to P190 billion in 2001. Corruption syndicates now based in Malacañang pocketed more than P95 billion in taxes that large companies had evaded paying through tax scams. On the other hand, an estimated P21 billion was raked in due to kickbacks from government purchases of materials and services and from infrastructure projects. Up to P74 billion was milked (mainly by the Arroyo couple) from government transactions with private corporations regarding huge contracts for "development projects."

Very recently, even with the exposé of the big-time anomaly involving Malacañang, PIATCO and the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard still hot, much bigger anomalies were

uncovered regarding Malacañang's grant to IMPSA of the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan Project and Malacañang's attempt to wrest control of Meralco from the Lopez family.

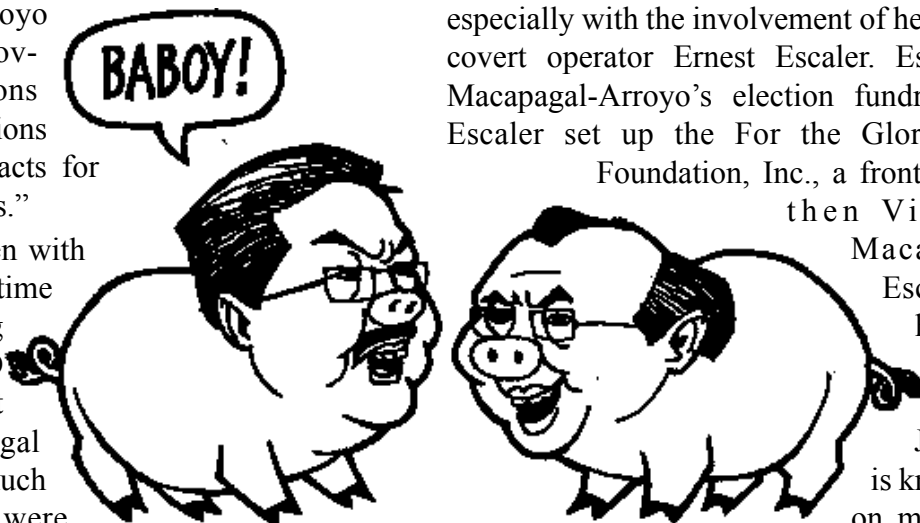
IMPSA

This November, Malacañang and Justice Secretary Hernando Perez's extortion in relation to the energy contract with the Argentine corporation Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima (IMPSA) was completely laid bare. The exposé was made by no less than Rep. Mark Jimenez, a former Estrada minion who played a key role as an intermediary between IMPSA and the newly installed Macapagal-Arroyo regime in January 2001. Macapagal-Arroyo had only been in power for five days when the regime hastily approved the anomalous contract for the operation of the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan electric power plant in exchange for a \$14 million bribe (P700 million) that Perez, Finance Sec. Jose Camacho and Macapagal-Arroyo divided among themselves.

Although Jimenez's exposé centered on Perez, he could not avoid entangling Macapagal-Arroyo especially with the involvement of her close friend and covert operator Ernest Escaler. Escaler is one of Macapagal-Arroyo's election fundraisers. In 1999, Escaler set up the For the Glory of Children's

Foundation, Inc., a front organization for then Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Escaler keeps on harping that he is simply a "private banker." But like Jimenez, Escaler is known as an expert on money laundering.



After trying in vain to extricate himself, Escaler hastily fled to the US.

Escaler served as Macapagal-Arroyo's representative in the regime's secret negotiations with IMPSA. He also served as the conduit for bribes now ensconced in secret bank accounts abroad. All things considered, the \$2 million bribe Perez got is chicken feed compared to the amount pocketed by Macapagal-Arroyo. Macapagal-Arroyo has thus been scrambling to attack Jimenez and resist any kind of inquiry into the case. To distance herself from the controversy, she immediately ordered Perez to take a leave of absence as Department of Justice secretary. He has been temporarily replaced by Merceditas Gutierrez, a close friend of the Arroyo family.

Meralco

Also exposed this November was the regime's extortion of the Lopez family. According to no less than Camacho, negotiations between the regime and the Lopez family began as early as October when the former got wind of the unfavorable resolution of Meralco's legal cases. The secret negotiations grew intense a few days before the Supreme Court eventually ordered Meralco to return to its consumers P28 billion it had illegally collected over the past eight years. The amount constitutes practically 40% of the company's estimated P71 billion capital. If the order is enforced immediately, this would obliterate whatever income the company earns in 2002 and in the coming years.

Macapagal-Arroyo now holds the Lopez family by the leash because it is entirely up to the Energy Regulatory Commission in what manner and over how long a time Meralco should return the amount it had overbilled. To further bring the Lopezes to their knees, the regime has also threatened to take control of Meralco.

According to Sen. John Osmeña, the regime has set its eyes not only on Meralco. It is also extremely

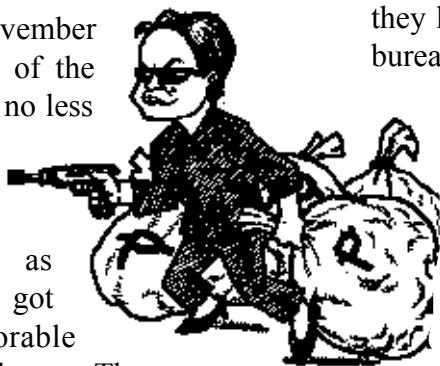
interested in gaining concessions in, if not control over, the giant Lopez media corporation, ABS-CBN. To coerce the Lopezes, the government has not placed any public and political advertisement in ABS-CBN since the previous year. The station's overall advertising income has dropped 12% as a result. Macapagal-Arroyo is interested in acquiring ABS-CBN, including The Filipino Channel, for her candidacy in 2004. With the impending approval of the Overseas Absentee Voting bill allowing Filipinos based abroad to vote during elections, The Filipino Channel will be a tremendous help, being the only Philippine cable channel that broadcasts to different countries.

In MACAPAGAL-ARROYO AND HER MINIONS' desperation to amass wealth and raise funds for the 2004 elections, they have only further exposed themselves as corrupt bureaucrats who are no different from those of the despised Estrada regime.

Even the latest anti-corruption gimmick cooked up by Macapagal-Arroyo's propagandists will not wash away the scandals generated by their ilk.

On November 30, Macapagal-Arroyo announced the abolition of the Philippine Estate Authority (PEA) and the invalidation of the government contract with the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. (PIATCO). These decisions resolve nothing. In fact, they even serve to cover up her own involvement in the controversies hounding the two organizations. It will be remembered that the Arroyos were implicated last October in the overpricing perpetrated by their cohorts at the PEA with respect to the construction of the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard.

Also exposed in the same period was the regime's coercion (coursed through Presidential Adviser on Strategic Projects Gloria Tan-Climaco) of corporations under PIATCO involved in the construction of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3. Because PIATCO no longer holds these contracts, Macapagal-Arroyo is now free to grant the contracts to more favored cronies or to renegotiate for new bribes. **AB**



Macapagal-Arroyo in mad scramble for 2004

As more controversies heat up regarding cases of corruption and anomalies involving the regime's high officialdom, Macapagal-Arroyo's chances of remaining in power beyond 2004 grow ever slimmer. She is now in a mad scramble to raise her dwindling hopes of winning in the elections.

Macapagal-Arroyo has consistently been ousted by two or three other potential candidates in the latest surveys. Thus, even the camp of ousted president Estrada has bragged that anyone from their ranks will easily defeat Macapagal-Arroyo. Even within the ruling faction, she does not enjoy unequivocal support. Besides the fact that there are many who feel lukewarm over her candidacy, several of her partymates are interested in the presidency.

A reliable and strong electoral machinery that Macapagal-Arroyo can call her own has yet to emerge. The reactionary political parties that supported her ascension to Malacañang have their own interests and directions and do not owe her any loyalty. Foremost among these parties is the LAKAS-NUCD, which is controlled by former President Fidel Ramos, who secretly opposes her candidacy. All she can rely on is the small-time party KAMPI set up by Jose "Peping" Cojuangco--which leans towards the Council for Philippine Affairs--and which Macapagal-Arroyo propagandist Dante Ang has been trying hard to revive.

To make up for this, Macapagal-Arroyo has anchored her political ambitions on manipulating the bureaucratic-military structure nationwide. She has positioned retired police and military officials of proven loyalty to strategic posts in the civil bureaucracy. With the help of the military and police, her personal propagandists set up in November the Gabay sa Mamamayan Aksyon Center (GMA Center). She is thus able to use as her own support network and campaign machinery the intelligence networks set up by the AFP and PNP in countryside villages to counter the revolutionary movement. It is Malacañang itself that coordinates the layout and activities of GMA

Centers and government civilian agencies in order to use their resources and bureaucratic organization to set up a grassroots machinery for Macapagal-Arroyo.

Macapagal-Arroyo is endeavoring to broaden her base within the military structure. She has fattened up military officers with bribes and has implemented the "revolving door policy" or the endless *rigodon* in the AFP leadership to give opportunities to more aspirants to become chiefs of staff even for a short while, and thus win them over to her side.

On the other hand, she is ever vigilant with her own camp, the better to thwart anyone who has strong potential, shows interest in the presidency and is in danger (to Macapagal-Arroyo) of winning US support. Macapagal-Arroyo used the cases and grievances of Department of Education employees against then education secretary Raul Roco to damage his reputation and boot him out of the cabinet in

September. Roco consistently tops surveys for the presidency conducted by different institutions. When Macapagal-Arroyo noticed that Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes

was angling and preparing for his own political ambitions, she immediately took measures to stymie them. It was Macapagal-Arroyo herself who exposed the P500 million anomaly involving

Reyes at the Department of National Defense. Reyes has been using the funds

to set up non-government organizations and institutions not unlike Macapagal-Arroyo's front charity organizations. With Reyes' plans for the presidency in 2004 still uncertain, she and Macapagal-Arroyo continue to collaborate within the government. Reyes may yet gain the US' blessings as Macapagal-Arroyo continues to weaken politically.

Mike and Gloria Arroyo are trying to raise millions of dollars and billions of pesos for 2004. They rake in most of it from concession and contract holders of all big government projects--among the bigger and more controversial ones are the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard and the Caliraya-Botocan-



Kalayaan Project--and funds from PAGCOR, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and other offices directly under the Office of the President whose funds are not subject to review by the Commission on Audit.

With the impending passage of the absentee voting bill, Macapagal-Arroyo has very indelicately appointed her husband as “special envoy” for overseas Filipino workers (OFW). This has no other aim but to give Mike Arroyo unlimited access to funds and other government resources so he could use them this early in the game to court the votes of seven million OFWs for his wife. Although he has said that he would not be asking for a salary or transport fare, government funds will be used to defray the travel expenses of his huge retinue and the personnel, resources and funds of embassies and other OFW-related government agencies will be used for the campaign.

Malacañang is also set to extract hefty financial support from big business. It is this objective that is

behind Macapagal-Arroyo’s grant of a new round of economic concessions to big business. (*Refer to the article “Courting more US and comprador support for 2004”*).

Above all, Macapagal-Arroyo is banking mainly on the blessings and support of the US, which is the most decisive factor in determining the outcome of reactionary presidential elections in the country. To secure this, she has shown her utter puppetry and has kowtowed to each and every dictate of US imperialism, mainly in endorsing the US’ international “war against terrorism” and its implementation in the Philippines and in advocating imperialist “globalization.” To boost herself in the eyes of the US, she presents herself as the “champion of counter-terrorism” in Southeast Asia and has traitorously approved the MLSA despite widespread opposition from the people, the reactionary opposition and even from within her own party. **AB**

Changes in the Macapagal-Arroyo cabinet

Courting more US and comprador support for 2004

MACAPAGAL-ARROYO MADE CERTAIN CHANGES IN HER cabinet in the last days of November and in early December. It is not true, as she has claimed, that the changes were done merely in the interest of fine-tuning or improving her cabinet.

Macapagal-Arroyo firmly stands by Justice Secretary Hernando Perez. Nonetheless, the president was constrained to order to Perez to go on leave on November 27 due to intense accusations by Rep. Mark Jimenez that Perez received a \$2 million bribe (equivalent to more than P100 million).

On November 30, Macapagal-Arroyo followed up with replacing some other members of her cabinet due to intense pressure on the regime to step up the pace of imperialist “globalization” and grant more concessions to big foreign and comprador interests.

Heherson Alvarez’s removal from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was a favor granted by Macapagal-Arroyo to Alvarez’s big business rivals. Among them are the Paper Industries Corporation of the Philippines (PICOP), the biggest logging company in the country, and the Pichay family. Macapagal-Arroyo

expects to receive support from them both for her candidacy in 2004. Alvarez’s enemies used the corruption cases filed against him and anomalous contracts he entered into as DENR secretary.

Alvarez had refused PICOP’s application for a “presidential warranty” that would have allowed it to hold on to its expired concessions in Mindanao. Alvarez had also insisted that the company pay P38 billion in taxes it owed the government. PICOP was likewise displeased with Alvarez’s proposal on how to resolve the disputes in Mt. Diwalwal.

Alvarez also courted the ire of Cavite Rep. Plaridel Abaya for conniving with several small-time companies in the importation of chemicals destructive to the ozone layer.

Alvarez’s replacement is Elisea Gozun, a DENR assistant secretary and well-known as a consultant of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank on environmental issues.

On the other hand, Macapagal-Arroyo found former Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Leonardo Montemayor too slack in implementing pro-“globalization” programs that Malacañang wanted to hype. Thus, the new



Fascist state on a rampage

Violations of human rights *(October-December 2002)*

KARAPATAN has recorded 1,545 cases of human rights violations since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took power. Seventy percent (70%) were perpetrated by the military, 13% by the PNP and the rest by goons, vigilantes and other groups. Following are some of the most recent cases:

December 5. Police illegally arrested and detained 66 persons in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. Unyon ng Manggagawang Bukid sa Occidental Mindoro chair Andrew Mendoza and KARAPATAN provincial chair Pastor Rodel Gregorio were arrested while distributing leaflets on the demand for a P15 increase in the support price for palay. The two along with 14 members of Anakbayan were accused of being members of the New People's Army and charged with sedition.

November 22-23. Five members of PAMALAKAYA, all of them residents of Puerto Galera, Oriental

Mindoro, were killed by suspected soldiers, according to the militant fisherfolk group. Oscar Sacdalan, 48, of Sitio Hulo, Barangay Tabinay Maliit was forcibly taken from his house by men wearing bonnets and military uniforms at around 2:30 a.m. on November 23, brought outside and shot to death. Also killed that day was Vedaso Lalong-isip, 58, of Barangay Talipanan.

On November 22, Victor Saducos and Arsenio Manalo were abducted at around 11 p.m. by men in military uniform and armed with M14 and M16 rifles. They have not been found to date and are feared dead. Prior to this, Anthony Martinez, 37, leader of the Nagkakaisang Mamamayan ng Puerto Galera, was also abducted from the same barangay. His severed head was found in Barangay Km. 37 and his body in Barangay Villafior.

November 14. Task Force Tapaz (TFT), a fact-finding mission launched from October 7-11 by KARAPATAN-Panay, has exposed

widespread military abuses against the Tumandok-Sulodnon tribe in Tapaz, Capiz. TFT identified the perpetrators of the human rights violations as troops from the 12th IB and the Division Strike Coy of the Philippine Army 3rd ID. Capiz vice governor Victor Tanco and the Sangguniang Panlalawigan have affirmed the TFT report.

The violations include, among others, the destruction of crops during military operations, forced recruitment into the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU), the imposition of curfews and the forcible conversion into detachments of the masses' houses in the barrio. In Daan Sur, in particular, where there is a heavy concentration of military troops, grenades are attached to houses and along roadsides at night, endangering the lives of civilians.

October 13-November 12. There have been six cases of abduction and harassment perpetrated by police, military and paramilitary forces against media personnel recorded in this period, according

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DA secretary's program will contain a more frenzied advocacy of imperialist "globalization" in agriculture and the interests of big foreign agribusinesses.

Montemayor's replacement is Luis Lorenzo Jr., a big comprador--he chairs, among others, the American agribusiness company Del Monte Philippines Inc. and agricultural products exporter Lapanday Foods Corp. He is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Advisory and the ASEAN Free Trade Advisory (AFTA). As

president of the Philippine Rice Research Institute, he spearheaded the propagation of rice varieties that were completely dependent on commercial pesticides.

Lorenzo is also one of Macapagal-Arroyo's reliable propagandists. In August, he paid public relations firm Burston & Marsteller \$1 million to boost Macapagal-Arroyo's image in the US. Recently, he mendaciously bragged that the regime's program to raise one million jobs was a success even if it was an utter failure. **AB**

to the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines (NUJP). The NUJP added that most of the incidents occurred in the provinces: four in the Visayas, one in Southern Tagalog and one involved a Malacañang reporter. The abducted media personnel were Edmund Sestoso of DYSR, Dumaguete City and Lloyd Wilson Sato of the CEGP in Cebu City. On the other hand, goons of landlord Bobby Cuenca threatened and mauled Carl Vanzales of the *Visayas Daily Courier* and ABS-CBN Bacolod crew members Joel Saracho and Edmund Lasala. Among the latest cases of harassment took place on November 8 and involved Edu Paringit, a cameraman for TVNet, a local television station based in Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro. Paringit was accused of being a member of the NPA by 204th Bde commander Col. Jovito Palparan for covering the violent demolition of houses in the city.

Earlier in 2002, three journalists were killed, three others abducted and many others threatened merely for coming out with reports critical of the military and the Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

November 11. Troops of the 61st IB arrested and tortured farmer Moises Arcadeña, 62; his sons Eddie, Ely and Moreto; and Marcelito Romano and Demetrio Bitongga after an encounter between the NPA and the Philippine Army in Barangay Manlocahoc, Sipalay City. The military accused them of involvement in the encounter.

The victims were hog-tied. They were forced to admit to being NPA supporters, beaten up and hit with rifle butts several times. Moises was beaten with a piece of wood while Moreto's shoulder was lacerated with a knife. They suffered burns from hot pieces of metal pressed against their bodies. Eddie and Ely were kicked around by the abusive soldiers.

Romano and Bitongga were forced to serve as guides. As they searched for the NPA, the two peasants were dragged along a rocky stream. Their heads were dunked into the water several times.

Moreto's son Sammy was also forced to serve as guide.

Soldiers also harassed a married couple, Rodolfo and Gina Bayloysis. They ransacked the house of a certain Moreto Paborada, who said that the military tore up important papers such as birth certificates, their marriage certificate, diplomas and ownership documents on his carabao and motorcycle. The soldiers even stole P500 kept in the family's cabinet.

The victims and their families have stopped farming for fear that the military would return.

November 10. A suspected soldier killed UCCP pastor Loreto Macalangan while the latter presided over religious services in Barangay Upper Ticulon, Malita, Davao del Sur. Macalangan strongly opposed setting up a CAFGU unit in their barangay.

November 8. Police and military forces demolished 32 houses in Bagong Pook, San Vicente South, Calapan City after two failed attempts in February and March.



The demolition proceeded this time after hordes of police and military forces and hired goons were sent to the area. Philippine Army tanks were also positioned near the demolition site.

October 20. Five soldiers of the 78th IB killed teenager Agustin Abile in Tabuelan, Cebu while he was waiting for a ride near a military detachment. The military justified killing Abile, whom they accused of being a "communist rebel" who tried to grab a gun from one of the soldiers. Abile's parents belied the military's claims, saying it was impossible for their son to become an NPA member because he was mentally challenged. They have filed murder charges against the soldiers.

October 12. Six persons, including two Bayan Muna (BM) coordinators, were arrested and interrogated by the military in Barangay San Rafael, Rodriguez, Rizal while they were holding a meeting. Arrested were Mario Bungkaras, Virgilio Andrade, Laila Rivera and Analisa Elis and BM members Crisaldo Bautista and Ofelia Duldulao. They were interrogated on their so-called "anti-government activities." Bautista and Duldulao were released only by midnight of October 12 while the four others were allowed to return home at around 2 a.m. of October 13. The victims have filed charges of illegal detention against the military. **AB**

The worsening Venezuelan political crisis

The political crisis in Venezuela has led to severe polarization. On one side is President Hugo Chavez who stands against the neoliberal policy dictates of US imperialism. On the other are big businessmen and landlords who benefit from such policies.

Chavez's enemies are using every resource to oust the president. Since early this year, they have relentlessly organized anti-government protest actions. In April, they briefly deposed Chavez in a US-backed coup. A counter-coup prompted by widespread demonstrations quickly restored him to power. Anti-Chavez forces including a faction of military officers have occupied a plaza in the capital city of Caracas since October 22. On December 2, they kicked off a general strike which sparked violence on December 6.

The conflict is sharpening and fears of civil war are widespread.

Roots of the conflict

Since getting elected in 1998, Chavez has shaken traditional politics in Venezuela with the program he calls the "Bolivarian Revolution" promising to overturn the unequal distribution of the nation's wealth

(See related article). Venezuela is the world's fifth largest petroleum producer, but about 80% of its people live in poverty due to imperialist domination.

The political antagonisms started to boil in November 2001 when congress enacted 49 laws trained against the "free market", the economic oligarchy and corruption. These laws were the first decisive step of the Chavez government to implement the provisions of the constitution ratified in 1999.

Chavez enjoys broad support especially from Venezuela's poor because his anti-imperialist stand reflects their sentiments. However, a section of the people are also expressing discontent due to the severe economic crisis. Such a situation is being exploited by the US and part of the ruling classes who are not pleased with his populist stance.

US interests

The US is particularly interested in privatizing the Venezuelan oil industry to put it at the disposal of American multinational companies. Venezuela is the US' fourth largest source of imported oil. Chavez refuses to subject the country's economy and politics to US interests. Thus, the US continually prepares to oust him by any means, in order to put in place a puppet regime and reduce the country into a semicolony.

For the time being, however, the US is toning down its firm opposition to Chavez as its attention is focused on its planned attack on Iraq. Any other disturbance that may disrupt oil supply and increase oil prices is contrary to US interest. The US wants the immediate easing of political tension in Venezuela so as to allay another possibility that it would lead to violent confrontation. Any further deterioration of the situation would certainly impact on the US economy.

On this basis, the US has warned both sides not to resort to moves "either to overthrow the government or keep it in power unconstitutionally." The US is trying to rein in the opposition as it perceives Chavez still enjoys strong popular support.

However, the US' self-restraint is temporary. The Venezuelan people's continued support is more important than ever for Chavez as it is the key to his regime's survival and stability. Chavez can count on it if he keeps firm with respect to his anti-imperialist declarations and decisively fulfills his promise of social change.

AB



Hugo Chavez and his "Bolivarian Revolution"

Hugo Chavez was a lieutenant colonel in the Venezuelan Army. He first appeared in the international scene in February 1992 when he led a coup against then president Andres Perez.



He was imprisoned after the unsuccessful coup but was later released in 1994 when Perez was impeached and thrown out of office.

In 1997, Chavez organized his political party, the Fifth Republic Movement. He ran for the presidency in 1998 and garnered 56% of the votes.

He changed the constitution of Venezuela and reorganized Congress and the courts to consolidate what he called the "Bolivarian Revolution" in 1999. He named his movement after Simon Bolivar, leader of the South American struggle for independence from Spanish colonialism in the 19th century.

His most outstanding act as president was increasing budget allocations for anti-poverty projects. He launched the program Plan Bolivar 2000 for which he mobilized the armed forces to deliver social services to the poorest sections of the population. He organized neighborhoods into committees called "Bolivarian Circles" and mobilized them in the implementation of his program.

Chavez's bourgeois-nationalist tendency is noteworthy. He is a staunch critic of imperialist globalization and the exploitative and extravagant lifestyle of big Venezuelan businessmen. Among the main issues being opposed by his adversaries is his tightened control over Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), the state-owned oil company, by replacing its management. The PDVSA accounts for some 75% of Venezuela's export earnings.

In the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Chavez advocates strict adherence of member states to oil production control, contrary to US interests. He has further earned the ire of the US since he criticized its war against Afghanistan and its warmongering against Iraq. The US is not amused either with his ties with Cuba, Iraq, Iran and Libya. **AB**

Afghanistan: A year of occupation

The puppet Karzai regime in Afghanistan is being bludgeoned by an intense political crisis, contrary to the propaganda spewed by the US and United Kingdom that Afghanistan has enjoyed freedom and peace since joint American and British forces ousted the Taliban last year. Since the height of the US war in Afghanistan, acts of violence by occupation troops have dominated the scene as well as armed and unarmed resistance waged by the people. Recently, a bloody demonstration against the regime of Prime Minister Hamid Karzai and the foreign occupation forces grabbed the headlines. Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, has been the center of violent and bloody confrontations.



Such turmoil demonstrates the people's widespread discontent with Karzai's pro-imperialist and antipeople government. It likewise highlights the intense infighting in the Northern Alliance, the group of warlords and druglords used by the US to subjugate Afghanistan.

The emergence of an independent mass movement that openly opposes US rule and that of its puppet Karzai is also of significance. The people's sense of patriotism has been fired up by widespread abuses committed by foreign occupation troops. In Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan, protests have erupted against US bombings. Anti-government demonstrations have also occurred in other parts of the country.

Political rivalries

Political infighting continues to intensify in the ruling faction installed by the US. In the space of one year, two high officials of the puppet Karzai regime have been killed. On February 14, Transport and Tourism Minister Abdul Rahman was shot to death. On July 6, Abdul Qadir, one of the vice presidents in Karzai's cabinet, was killed. Karzai himself has been the subject of several assassination attempts. There is widespread belief that the attempts were plotted by other factions within the

Northern Alliance who have long desired Karzai's ouster. Fearing for his life, Karzai has asked the US to provide him with bodyguards from the US Special Forces.

Even as the various political factions have clashed violently, there are fears, especially among commanders of the US forces, regarding reports that remnants of the Taliban and al Qaida and patriotic guerrilla forces led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar have joined forces along the southern border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The area is controlled by the Pashtun tribe, the Taliban's base. The Pashtun have long opposed the Karzai government for its cruelty and acts of violence against them. Although Karzai is Pashtun, his government is dominated by the minority Tajik tribe. The Pashtun, who form the majority, have no real representation in government. **AB**

Acts of cruelty by US troops in Afghanistan

Many have complained about abuses committed by US Special Forces in Afghanistan--not only local government officials but also humanitarian aid workers and diplomats from the US and Europe. The abuses include, among others, excesses committed during searches of houses of suspected al Qaida sympathizers. As a result, civilians have taken up arms and frequent clashes have erupted between them and coalition forces. In fact, American commanders have admitted that they fear conducting patrols beyond the perimeter of Kabul, especially at night. Female military officials have been assigned to frisk Afghan women suspected of smuggling arms and explosives to the guerrillas.

Aside from such military abuses, there have been frequent strafing incidents by US helicopters against civilians such as the one involving the massacre of members of a wedding party in Uruzgan on July 1 where 48 Afghans were killed and 117 wounded. The soldiers who perpetrated the massacre have been acquitted.

Another instance involved the cruel treatment by US Special Forces of hundreds of captured Taliban soldiers who were packed in container vans with no food or water and with the only ventilation coming from a few air vents. Almost all of the prisoners died as the container vans traversed the middle of the desert. **AB**

16th congress of the revisionist CPC

Further consolidation of capitalist restoration in China

The 16th congress of the revisionist Communist Party of China (CPC) held last November once again demonstrated that the bourgeoisie now completely prevails and that capitalism has been restored in China.

The most important resolutions ratified by the congress are all geared at outrightly admitting bourgeois elements up to leading positions in the CPC and the broadening of the role played by private capital in China's economy.

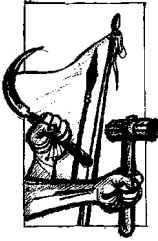
In absolute deviation from the correct line of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, Jiang Zemin declared that capitalists are "partners in building socialism with Chinese characteristics". For the first time, tycoons attended a CPC congress as official delegates.

Whatever remains of China's socialist legacy is now being dismantled completely to give way to the unbridled expansion of capitalism.

The congress approved resolutions allowing the entry of private business interests in more sectors of the economy, and the lifting of restrictions on the growth of such businesses. It also ratified the need for more legal protection of private property, as well as levelling the playing field for private and "state" enterprises.

Maintaining China's socialist mantle, the CPC declared that the "state sector" shall continue to play a "dominant role". In fact, however, privatization has been shrinking the state sector since the mid-1990s. The CPC distortedly declared that "state ownership can be achieved through majority or even minority ownership of companies, instead of 100 percent ownership".

The CPC gives utmost importance to bourgeois interests. The working class and the peasantry have been marginalized and are now suffering increasing poverty especially in the countryside; unemployment; the widening gap between the few capitalists who are growing richer and the increasing number of the poor; cutbacks in pensions and social services; rising prices of commodities; corruption; the spread of decadent culture; and other evils of the capitalist system. **AB**



TIAMZON, AUSTRIA REJECT TIGLAO OFFER

Comrades Benito Tiamzon and Wilma Austria directly rejected on November 13 Macapagal-Arroyo spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao's feigned offer to "talk peace."

The couple, who are leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines, stressed that the offer was a cheap shot at the revolutionary movement and its leaders, especially Comrade Jose Ma. Sison, and denigrated their continuing and unwavering commitment to the people's democratic struggle.

Comrades Tiamzon and Austria belittled Tiglao's false compassion for their being "old and ill," saying that it was being with the masses in the struggle to overthrow the oppressive and exploitative system that strengthened their revolutionary life and vigor.

"Peace and friendship are the least of Tiglao's concerns now as he works hand in glove with the Blas Ople, Angelo Reyeses and Roilo Golezes to demonize the revolutionary movement, scuttle the peace talks and intensify armed counterrevolution with increasing overt and covert assistance and intervention by US forces," the couple added.

Comrades Tiamzon and Austria clarified that the revolutionary movement was "serious and sincere" in its efforts to advance the peace process. They reiterated the need to abide by the agreements signed by the GRP and NDFP since 1992 regarding the conduct of the peace talks.

CONTINUATION OF PEACE TALKS URGED

Church people and other sectors urged the resumption of peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP.

The call was made by former Ecumenical Bishops Forum chair Bishop Julio Labayan in a gathering of peace and human rights advocates at the UP Asian Center on November 20, through a petition entitled "Resume Formal Peace Talks Now!" The statement was signed by various Protestant and Catholic bishops and thousands of other people.

The same call was issued on November 14 by the Pampanga Mayors' League and the Bishops and Ulama Forum in Mindanao.

SAKBAYAN LAUNCHED IN SOUTHERN TAGALOG

A three-day Sakay Lakbay ng Mamamayan (Sakbayan) was launched on December 8 in Lucena City to expose and assail widespread human rights violations in Southern Tagalog. More than 300 activists joined the Sakbayan.

According to Tanggol Karapatan, which led the protest caravan, at least 967 cases of human rights violations have been recorded in Southern Tagalog since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo came to power, victimizing at least 1,558 families and 2,893 individuals. The provinces most battered by military abuses were Oriental Mindoro and Quezon.

The protest caravan was brought to the offices of the Department of National Defense and the Commission on Human Rights on December 9.



NAPOCOR WORKERS STAGE PROTEST

NAPOCOR workers and employees have staged a series of protest actions since December 2 against the early implementation of plans to restructure the company. Three unions have joined the protests--the NAPOCOR Employees and Workers' Union, the NAPOCOR Employees Consolidated Union and the Executive Association. They oppose the planned termination of 3,270 workers in January. The planned restructuring is an initial step towards the corporation's full privatization.

Workers from the various NAPOCOR offices nationwide are supporting the protest action.

PHILIPPINE RABBIT WORKERS STRIKE

Drivers, conductors and other workers of the Philippine Rabbit Bus Line staged a two-week strike from October 30 to November 11.

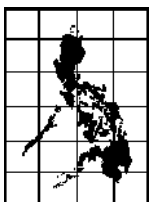
They criticized the company's direct violations of their collective bargaining agreement; its refusal to dialogue with the union; excessive withholding tax deductions; and non-payment of workers' benefits. They also complained about the illegal termination and suspension of union members. Their daily wages were also below the prescribed minimum wage. They receive only a little over P200 daily even as the company earns P14,000 daily per bus.

U.S. TO FORM AFP RAPID DEPLOYMENT FORCE

Seeking to redouble its intervention in the counterrevolutionary war in the Philippines, the US is set to

form a Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) within the AFP. The force will be organized, trained and armed by the US to fight the revolutionary movement and the MILF. It will also be used in US wars of aggression and intervention in Asia and other parts of the world.

Apart from organizing the RDF, which the regime is still keeping under wraps, Light Reaction Companies (LRC) trained by the US in close quarter combat and sniping have also been set up. The US has already trained two LRCs. It is set to train two more LRCs as well as 16 Light Infantry Companies in 2003.



AUSTRALIA POSES AS U.S. PROXY IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

Australia's rightist prime minister John Howard threw a fit in reaction to the terrorist bombing in Bali, Indonesia on October 12 that claimed the lives of close to

200 tourists, most of them Australian. He has stepped up racist and repressive policies against Indonesian migrants in Australia. Raids on their houses as well as torture, harassment and other oppressive acts have been perpetrated without letup.

Not content, Howard has proposed unilateral preemptive strikes by Australia on terrorists in any Asian country. He said it was necessary to amend the United Nations charter in order to allow such preemptive strikes.

Howard's proposal is a much more direct repetition of what chief imperialist President George W. Bush of the US has said and actually done. It therefore comes as no surprise for Bush to have agreed with and supported what his Asia-Pacific spokesperson and proxy has said.

Southeast Asian countries bristled at Howard's arrogant and bullyish proposal. The most stinging criticisms came from Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad who said that if Australia's acts should cause deaths in Malaysia, they would consider them as acts of war and take action in accordance with their laws to defend Malaysian sovereignty and independence.

In the face of Howard's blatant and arrogant statements, even Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople was obliged to express some feigned criticism, assailing Australia's "pro-hegemonic ambition." But it

was all for show, given the fact that he and the Macapagal-Arroyo government he serves fully support similar acts by the US in the Philippines.

BUDGET DEFICIT AND DEBTS SWELL ANEW; ECONOMY GETS FAILING GRADE

The country's budget deficit reached P187 billion as of end-October and is expected to grow to P223 billion by the end of 2002. This is bigger than the regime's budget deficit estimate of P130 billion for this year.

According to Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, servicing the country's debt is the biggest reason behind continued borrowing which in turn expands the budgetary deficit. Camacho claimed that the Macapagal-Arroyo regime enjoyed a surplus during its first year in office. He said that the budgetary deficit grew only by the end of 2001 when interest payments were made. This year, government overspending amounted to P34.8 billion but it incurred a budget deficit of more than P200 billion due to interest payments.

According to Camacho's calculations, the country's overall debt stood at P2.716 trillion by the end of September, 17% higher than the previous year's figure. The country, he said, owes up to P1.412 trillion in local debts and P1.304 trillion in foreign debts. But according to Sen. Ralph Recto, the country's overall debt actually stands at P3.26 trillion. He said it was necessary to factor in P535 billion in debts and government-guaranteed loans of private corporations under the build-operate-transfer scheme. To pay the interest, the government needs to raise P411.47 billion next year. Recto added that the country's debt crisis is bound to get worse, especially as the government expects lower tax collections in 2003.

The country's yawning budget deficit has prompted the London-based investment institution Fitch to give the Philippine economy a failing grade. In October, Standard and Poor's had also given the country failing marks. They have warned foreign corporations against investing in the country.

IBALOI ELEVATES CASE VS. CAMP JOHN HAY TO U.N.

The heirs of Mateo Cariño, an Ibaloi and former Katipunan leader in the Cordillera, filed a case with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on December 5 to recover 148 hectares of forest land that now

forms part of the Camp John Hay forest reservation in Baguio City.

Cariño won the first case he filed against the US colonial government in 1909 but the decision was never enforced. Worse, Camp John Hay, a recreation facility for US military officials, was later built on his land.

The reactionary government still refused to return the Cariños' land even after the US' military bases and other facilities were booted out of the country in 1991.



ARMED AND POLITICAL OFFENSIVES LAUNCHED IN NEPAL

Right after a three-day strike that paralyzed Nepal from November 10 to 12, another tactical offensive was launched by the revolutionary People's Liberation Army.

Up to 128 government troops were killed when guerrillas attacked police stations in Gurka and Galanga in the northwestern part of Jumla district on November 15. Another clash took place on November 23.

Prior to this, King Gyanendra had fired all elected government officials and called for new elections on November 11. The election failed to push through when it was met by the three-day strike waged by the people to protest the polls.

SOUTH KOREAN WORKERS PREVAIL AGAINST NEW LABOR POLICIES

Successive mass actions by Korean workers have forced lawmakers to withdraw their "proposed labor reforms" dictated by the WTO's globalization policy.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) criticized the "reforms" as a big blow to labor standards won by the workers' movement. The KCTU led a strike by 120,000 workers from 166 factories and offices from November 5 to 7.

Among the proposals opposed by the workers was a five-day work week coupled with corresponding wage deductions. Massive layoffs of workers and employees have also been planned starting 2004.

MASS ACTIONS AGAINST GLOBALIZATION

In Italy. Some 5,000 activists attended the five-day meeting of the European Social Forum in the city of Florence from November 5 to 9. After the meeting, they marched and assailed globalization and warmongering by big capitalist countries.

In France. Government employees waged the first mass action on November 25 by walking out and declaring a nationwide work stoppage. Some 10,000 of them marched to the port of Marseilles. Postal, transport, hospital and utility workers expressed their opposition to privatization plans that would adversely affect their salaries and pensions. Meanwhile, truck drivers set up barricades along the country's major highways. They were supported by some 50,000 train workers.

Air traffic controllers of Air France also launched a work stoppage on November 26 in support of the strike.

In the United Kingdom. Firefighters waged an eight-day strike that started on November 25. They demanded a 19% pay hike and opposed privatization plans.

In South Korea. Members of the Korean Financial Industry Union called for a strike on November 20 against the privatization of Chohung Bank. Prior to this, some 15,000 rallyists opposed to bank restructuring and privileges granted to foreign businesses clashed with the police in Seoul on November 13.

PROTESTS AGAINST U.S. WAR OF AGGRESSION

In Italy. One day after the United Nations Security Council approved the resolution endorsing the US' war plans, demonstrators poured out into the streets of Florence on November 9. Their numbers swelled from 500,000 to one million as they marched. It was the biggest anti-war demonstration in Italy.

In Australia. More than 20,000 persons joined a two-day rally-demonstration on November 30 and December 1 to oppose the Australian government's support for the US and UK's impending war on Iraq. The protest actions led by an alliance of worker leaders, activists and students spread from Sydney to seven other cities--Adelaide, Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, Brisbane, Darwin and Perth. Movie, theater and television personalities, church people, Leftist politicians and other civic leaders joined the protests as well as leaders of Arab and Muslim organizations in Australian communities.

Three-hundred eighteen legislators, groups and organizations signed a letter calling on President George W. Bush and his allies to put a stop to their plans of waging war on Iraq. Among the 318 signatories were leaders of the Anglican Church, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the US Peace Council and environmentalists like Friends of the Earth Australia.